

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS SPECIFICATIONS Code 575

Design

All walkways shall be designed and plans prepared in accordance with the NRCS FOTG Practice Standard 575, Animal Trails and Walkways. The practice Animal Trails and Walkways (Code 575) is used primarily to facilitate livestock movement. Access by vehicles and equipment for uses other than walkway management or maintenance should use the practice Access Road (code 560).

General Requirements

The suitability of the site for construction of a walkway or trail shall be determined prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Site preparation and installation of works shall be performed in a manner that destroys as little vegetation as possible outside the limits of the trail or walkway. Any bare areas created by construction activities shall be revegetated as soon as practicable. Areas stripped of vegetation should be held to a minimum at any one time. Any debris created from the site preparation shall be disposed of in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Layout

Travel ways should be laid out to allow for the smooth flow of livestock. Corners sharper than 90 degrees should be avoided.

- Marsh sites
If the walkway ends in the marsh without connecting to an existing ridge or levee, a “T” at least 40 feet long will be provided to reduce concentration of cattle. If the walkway is built adjacent to a property line, and “L” at least 30 feet in length will be provided.
- Upland sites
Trails and walkways should be located to most directly access the pastures to be grazed and facilitate the creation of pastures that are as square as possible.

If possible, locate trails and walkways on contour so they do not go directly up or down slopes. When possible, avoid locating trails and walkways through wetlands, streams, and other low-lying areas to reduce impacts on wetlands. If possible, avoid locating trails and walkways on Highly Erodible or Potentially Highly Erodible soils that are identified in the Highly Erodible Land Legend dated January 1, 1990, in Section 2 of the Field Office Technical Guide.

Gateways into alleys should be placed in paddock corners to facilitate animal movement. If the water source is outside the paddock locate the gate in the corner nearest the water facility. Gateways should be a minimum of 15 feet across and if possible the same width

as the alley. This will allow the gate to be used as a barrier across the travel way to better control animal movement into the desired pasture.

When possible, use the following guidance to maintain a minimum distance from watercourses to provide a buffer for soil erosion considerations.

Percent slope of land on which the trail or walkway is located	Minimum width of buffer (ft.) for given Hydrologic Soil Group			
	A	B	C	D
0 – 1	20	20	22	24
1 – 3	20	25	28	30
3 – 5	24	30	33	36
5 – 8	28	35	40	42
8 – 10	32	40	44	48

Construction and materials

Walkways and trails shall be constructed to the lines, grades, and locations shown on the plans. All water bars, culverts, bridges, or low water crossings shall be constructed at the locations and to the lines and grades as shown on the plans. Installation of such drainage structures shall be in conformance with the specifications for the practice standards Access Road (560) and/or Structure for Water Control (587).

All drainage structures should be installed in natural drains (where possible) and set with the top of the opening at or below normal ground level.

- Marsh sites
A minimum of 30% settlement shall be used when determining the constructed height of the walkway.

Borrow pits shall be staggered on either side of the walkway. If walkways are located next to a property line they may be located on one side provided earth plugs not less than 30 feet in length are left at intervals to prevent flow of water in the pits. Length of the borrow pits will be determined in the field.

- Upland sites
Trails or walkways may be built using permanent or temporary fencing materials, depending on the situation. When accessing permanent pastures, a permanent walkway should be built. For permanent walkways using barbwire, a four strand fence is the minimum required. A two-strand electric fence is required for a permanent electric fence walkway. Refer to the Fence (code 382) practice specifications for construction requirements.

For temporary travelways, such as may be used to improve utilization of annual forages, single strand electric fence may be used.